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A Smart Dipstick? A Reality for the Not-Too-Distant Future, Predicts UD Researcher; NBC Camera Crew to Visit UD Campus to Tape "Space Junk" Story for "Today Show"

featuring UD

Story ideas for print and broadcast media

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A SMART DIPSTICK?
A REALITY FOR THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE, PREDICTS UD RESEARCHER

Your plain old metal dipstick is about to become smarter.

Thanks to a technique developed by a University of Dayton chemist, a probe on the end of a dipstick may someday tell you it's time to change the oil by flashing you a message on your dashboard panel.

A smart dipstick? Not out of the question in the next three years, predicts Bob Kauffman, a research chemist in the University of Dayton Research Institute. Kauffman's technique, which has received two patents, measures the remaining useful life of oil--car oil, jet engine oil, even cooking oil--by calculating what's left of the antioxidant, an additive that keeps oil from degrading too fast.

A prototype of the system has been sold to a major jet engine company, and a domestic and foreign automaker have both expressed interest in the system.

For media interviews, contact Bob Kauffman at (513) 229-3942.

NBC CAMERA CREW TO VISIT UD CAMPUS
TO TAPE "SPACE JUNK" STORY FOR "TODAY SHOW"

An NBC camera crew and correspondent will visit the University of Dayton campus on Monday, April 30, to tape a story about "space junk" for the "Today Show."

The scheduled launch this week of the space shuttle Discovery with the Hubble Space Telescope has renewed interest in the problem of orbital debris, or "space junk." In the University of Dayton Research Institute, research engineer Andy Piekutowski has performed hypervelocity impact tests on several lightweight meteoroid shield systems for the Hubble Space Telescope to help protect it from dust and other space junk. Dust from meteoroids threatens to degrade performance of the telescope's mirrors and lenses, Piekutowski says, "just like having dirt on your glasses."

Testing materials that shield satellites and space vehicles from potential blows is Piekutowski's job. Using a special gun developed at UD that spans the length of a laboratory, Piekutowski and his staff shoot a projectile, often the size and weight of a pea or marble, at speeds up to 16,000 miles per hour. The target: composite metal or another type of material typically developed by a contractor for the space program.

NBC is expected to be on campus from approximately noon until 3 p.m. in the Kettering Laboratories Annex, Room 14. For information about the NBC story, contact Marisa Venegas at (212) 664-4376. This is not the story's first exposure on national television: CNN and CBS affiliates around the country have aired a piece produced by WHIO-TV.

For media interviews, contact Andy Piekutowski at (513) 229-3812.